



# the review

North Dakota Academy of Physician Assistants Newsletter

Cindy Renner, PA-C, Editor

March, 2012

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!**  
**Spring Primary Care Conference 2012**  
**May 3, 4, 2012**  
**Fargo Holiday Inn**

The 34th Annual primary care seminar offers up to 14 CME/CEU hours of continuing education in a wide variety of topics for both primary care and specialties. Updates on the following topics include:

Acute Coronary Syndrome, Cancer, Concussions, Elevated Liver Function Tests, HIV/AIDS & Other High Risk Infectious Disease Concerns, Hypertension Management Update, Inhaler Health, Intensive Insulin Programs for Type I & Type II Diabetes Technologies, Osteoporosis, Postpartum Depression, Radiology Overview, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, The Complication Screening and Avoidance, and Urgent Care.

In addition to obtaining quality continuing education, this conference is also a great place to network with your colleagues. You will also be able to register for a chance to win a 2013 conference registration, or one-year membership to the NDAPA organization.

Agenda, lodging and registration information can be found on the conference website:

<http://conferences.und.edu/primarycare/>. Deadline for early-bird registration is April 25th. Registration after that date will be \$50 higher. The NDAPA website, [www.ndapa.net](http://www.ndapa.net) also has a direct link to the conference website.

**KATHY OHLY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND  
AND SILENT AUCTION**

The NDAPA Spring Conference which will be held at the Holiday Inn, Fargo, ND on May 3 and 4, 2012 is fast approaching. As in past years, there will be a Silent Auction to raise money for the Kathy Ohly Scholarship Fund. This fund is used to award \$500.00 scholarships to two deserving North Dakota residents who are enrolled in the Physician Assistant Master's Program at UND. It is no secret that higher education is very expensive. Remember how tight things were when you were in school? These scholarships are used to help deserving students by giving them a financial boost! The NDAPA board would like to challenge all members to help make the silent auction a huge success.

Some great auction item ideas that have been used in the past include gift baskets; gift certificates to almost anything –stores, movies, a round of golf, etc. Other ideas include computer items; clothing; candy; music CD's; golf putters/clubs; books; a signed UND hockey jersey (remember it's almost certain that they will be changing their logo! Any collectors out there?!); home made items – food, crafts, embroidery; home grown/farm fresh eggs; cards; pictures... just about anything goes. Why not showcase your interests or hobby's by donating a silent auction gift? You might also consider approaching your employer or a local business. Without the generosity of the NDAPA membership, these scholarships would not be available.

**Advocacy on Capitol Hill**  
**Jeanie McHugo, PhD, PA-C**  
**Program Director, UND PA Program**

Recently I had the opportunity to visit the offices of our North Dakota Congressional Representatives on Capitol Hill in Washington DC. This occurred at the request of the Director of Government Relations from the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) in conjunction with my national committee meeting the following weekend. A flurry of e-mails occurred to schedule meetings with confirmations received from offices of Senator Hoeven and Senator Conrad; Representative Berg was unavailable the afternoon I was scheduled to be on Capitol Hill, but would try to stop in towards the end of the scheduled meeting time with his administrative staff.

In preparation for my meetings with each of the Congressional offices, I contacted the Center for Rural Health for information and data describing the current status of healthcare in North Dakota. I also contacted the Area Health Education Center (AHEC) program for information regarding the current status of PA workforce and employment in North Dakota. This information, along with introductory materials regarding the UND PA Program, organized in UND green School of Medicine and Health Science folders provided materials for presentation, discussion and future reference.

My agenda was straight forward – to review the following points as clearly and concisely as possible:

- the current status of healthcare in North Dakota
- the importance of the PA role in the health care system
- an overview of the UND PA Program
- how PAs can make a difference for the people of North Dakota
- challenges of PA education (clinical sites/preceptors, faculty development, funding)
- continued professional advocacy and promotion of the PA profession

With no flight delays and pre-arranged transportation straight to Capitol Hill, I was ready to meet with Senator Hoeven first, then Senator Conrad and last, after a quick walk to the House side of Capitol Hill, Representative Berg immediately following. Well, the best laid plans....the Senate and the House were both in an extended session conducting final votes on certain issues, so none of the Congressional Representatives were available for the meetings. In their absences, I was fortunate to present my talking points with legislative and executive assistants for all three Congressmen and left my folders of resources for their review.

All in all, the afternoon went well. I was able to share my insights, answer questions, provide resources and promote the PA profession as part of the solution to the health care concerns for the people of North Dakota. I am excited for the opportunity to present itself again and strongly encourage all of you to consider professional advocacy for the PA profession – it certainly is a purposeful mission!

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**First PA Appointed to North Dakota State Board of Medical Examiners**

Kate Larson, PA-C, has been appointed by North Dakota Governor Jack Dalrymple to the North Dakota State Board of Medical Examiners. Senate Bill 2154, which was signed into law last past spring, called for the governor to appoint a physician assistant to the state board of medical examiners. North Dakota was the last state to formally include PAs in the regulation of the profession. There are now 17 states that currently have PA representation on their medical boards.

Larson graduated from the University of North Dakota PA program and has been practicing at the Garrison Family Clinic in Garrison, ND, since 1995. Her four-year appointment to the board expires on July 31, 2015.

## State and Federal Laws Support Breastfeeding

More than 70 percent of new mothers now follow their doctor's advice to breastfeed immediately after birth. However, women employed full-time are less likely to initiate breastfeeding and to continue breastfeeding once they return to work. Only 25 percent of employed women with children under age one combine working and breastfeeding for at least one month.

Recent state and federal legislation demonstrates support for breastfeeding women who work.

### State Law:

In 2009, the North Dakota Legislature passed legislation to protect a woman's right to breastfeed her child in any location, public or private, where the woman and child are otherwise authorized to be. (*ND Century Code: 23-12-16, 2009*)

This legislation also states that an employer may use the designation "infant-friendly" on its promotional materials if the employer adopts a workplace breastfeeding policy that includes the following:

- Allowing flexible break times for expression of milk,
- Providing a clean, private space (other than a restroom) for pumping/nursing,
- Access to a clean water source for washing hands and cleaning breast pump equipment,  
and
- Providing a place for storing breast milk (such as a refrigerator or a cooler brought by the employee).

(*ND Century Code: 23-12-17, 2009*)

### Federal Law:

Federal law now requires employers to provide reasonable break time for an employee to express breast milk for her nursing child for one year after the child's birth each time such employee has need to express the milk. Employers are also required to provide a place, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public, which may be used by an employee to express breast milk. (*P.L. 111-148; amends Section 7 of the Fair Labor Standards Act, 2010*)

If you would like more information or would like to apply for the "infant friendly" designation go to [www.ndhealth.gov/breastfeeding](http://www.ndhealth.gov/breastfeeding).

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## NDAPA Website will post ND Physician Assistant Vacancies

Physician Assistant vacancies in North Dakota can now be posted on the NDAPA website free of charge. To post, please e-mail Terri Lang, Executive Secretary, [terri.lang@med.und.edu](mailto:terri.lang@med.und.edu). The document will be limited to text only (except letterhead, but can include a link to your facility's and/or community's website. It must be submitted in pdf, doc, or docx format, and is limited to no more than two pages. Your posting will be visible for 30 days unless you request a continuance.

## North Dakota Businesses Designated as “Infant Friendly”

Nine North Dakota businesses are the first in North Dakota to be recognized as "Infant Friendly," according to Deanna Askew, Healthy Communities coordinator for the North Dakota Department of Health.

The North Dakota Department of Health, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity, announces the new "infant friendly" designation, which recognizes worksites that adopt a workplace breastfeeding policy that includes:

Flexible work scheduling, including scheduling breaks and permitting work patterns that provide time for expression of breast milk.

A convenient, sanitary, safe and private location (other than a restroom), allowing privacy for breastfeeding or expressing breast milk.

A convenient, clean and safe water source with facilities for washing hands and rinsing breast-pumping equipment located near the private location.

A convenient place for temporarily storing breast milk, such as a refrigerator or cooler.

The following North Dakota businesses have been designated as infant-friendly:

Barnes County, Valley City

Bismarck State College, Bismarck

Central Avenue Health Mart Pharmacy, Valley City

Custer Health, Mandan

Foster County Public Health Department, Carrington

North Dakota State University

St. Catherine Elementary School, Valley City

Valley Health and WIC, Grand Forks

North Dakota Department of Health, Bismarck

The designation of these businesses coincided with Governor Jack Dalrymple's proclamation of Breastfeeding Week, August 1-7, 2011. This coincided with the global celebration of World Breastfeeding Week, an annual event that draws attention to the health impacts of breastfeeding for both babies and mothers.

“We understand that if a woman has support in her place of employment that she will breastfeed her infant for a longer duration,” said Askew. “This will give the baby an edge in overall health, including less infections, disease, obesity and diabetes.”

According to research, breastfeeding also benefits the employer. Such benefits include lower health-care costs because breastfed babies are healthier, lower absenteeism, and lower turnover rates since women are more likely to return to their previous jobs if the company provides support for breastfeeding mothers. These benefits can provide considerable cost savings to employers.

"We found that providing lactation support is a win-win for both the new mom and us, the employer," said Doreen Sayler, R.Ph., pharmacist and owner of Central Avenue Health Mart Pharmacy in Valley City. "Now the new mom doesn't have to choose between breastfeeding and working. She can reach her personal breastfeeding goals and we get to keep a valuable employee."

## Membership

The North Dakota Academy of Physician Assistants (NDAPA) Membership Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank our Academy members for your continuing support. In addition, we invite those of you who are not yet members or whose membership has lapsed, to join NDAPA. Membership runs from July 1 - June 30 of the following year.

NDAPA has become a vital group in connecting physician assistants to jobs, communities, legislative action, state/regional/national resources, and professional networking. We are committed to your professional development and your concerns.

What does NDAPA membership provide?

- NDAPA membership provides advocacy and leadership. You are now represented by a physician assistant who sits on the Board of Medical Examiners. NDAPA leaders participate at the regional and national planning conferences.
- NDAPA membership offers educational opportunities. Membership qualifies you for a free subscription to the Medical Letter and its CME components and Guidelines. NDAPA also sponsors an annual CME conference. Our annual CME conference offers these practice updates to assist you and your practice is providing the best possible health care.
- NDAPA monitors legislative activity to assist you in practice updates and protections.
- NDAPA promotes professional networking. Our newsletter and website keep members updated on practice changes and trends. Check us out at [www.ndapa.net](http://www.ndapa.net).
- NDAPA assists new graduates in role transition. The transition into a new profession is a daunting task. We take pride in helping PA's discover their future.
- NDAPA promotes the physician- physician assistant team concept. As dependent practitioners, we strive to position ourselves and our profession as part of that team.

Every state has found that physician assistant growth is directly tied to individual PA participation in those events that shape that particular state and region. North Dakota PAs share that common ground. Our future in North Dakota depends on individuals who are willing to step up and offer their talents. Ultimately, we define ourselves by what we have shared with others. In the past year, many North Dakota communities have been devastated by various disasters. Those communities who have worked together found their greatest strengths. Individuals working alone had an even more difficult year. NDAPA hopes that we can be part of your growth in the years ahead.

Please go to our online site, [www.ndapa.net](http://www.ndapa.net), click on membership information, fill out the form and send it to Terri Lang, Executive Secretary or if you are planning on attending the annual primary care conference in Fargo in May, you can join through your registration by paying the non-member rate. The link for conference registration is also found on the front page of our website. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Randy Perkins, PA-C, Membership Co-Chair  
Shelly Bartow, PA-C, Membership Co-Chair



## **NCCPA AWARDS FIRST CERTIFICATES OF ADDED QUALIFICATIONS**

**Contact:** *Arika Daniels, (888) 356-6406 x89, [arika@iacunato-mclane.com](mailto:arika@iacunato-mclane.com)*

**Johns Creek, GA,** January 17, 2012 – Recently 232 certified physician assistants (PAs) became the first to earn Certificates of Added Qualifications (CAQs) from the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) by meeting licensure, education and experience requirements and passing a specialty exam.

Recognition was offered in cardiovascular and thoracic surgery, orthopaedic surgery, emergency medicine, nephrology and psychiatry, specialties selected after discussions with PA and physician specialty organizations and consideration of needs and trends in health care. Across these five specialty areas, 94 percent of examinees earned the CAQ.

“The certified PAs who took the inaugural exams are to be commended for their willingness to be among the first to try to earn this recognition,” said NCCPA Chair Patricia Cook, MD, FACP. Two physician assistant’s from North Dakota received Certificates of Added Qualifications; Stacey Lee Berg, PA-C (Psychiatry) and Donna Elaine Verhasselt, PA-C (Orthopaedic Surgery). Congratulations.

The program has broad support in the health care arena; 66 percent of physicians agree that a CAQ is a valuable credential for certified PAs, according to a survey conducted by The Bantam Group in 2011.

“I felt strongly about supporting this because I felt it would garner more respect for us as PAs,” said Jennifer Carlquist, PA-C, one of 142 who earned a CAQ in emergency medicine. “We know how hard we work, but until now, there was really no way to document our expertise. This is another way to show the medical community that PAs are held to high professional standards.”

The 2012 CAQ exams in the same specialties will be conducted on September 10. Discussions regarding the addition of other specialties to the recognition program are ongoing.

“We are excited that the first Certificates of Added Qualifications have been awarded and expect the program to grow as certified PAs find this a valuable way to document specialty experience, skills and knowledge,” said Janet J. Lathrop, NCCPA president and CEO.

Details regarding the requirements for each of the specialty CAQ programs and content blueprints for the exams are available at <http://www.nccpa.net/SpecialtyCAQs.aspx>.

### **About the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants**

The National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) is the certifying organization for physician assistants in the United States. Since its inception as a not-for-profit organization in 1975, more than 97,000 physician assistants have been certified by NCCPA, and more than 85,000 are certified today. In addition to the CAQ program, NCCPA also administers certification and recertification exams, and has an established program for certification maintenance.

## 2012 PA of Year Nominations Sought

Annually, the North Dakota Academy of Physician Assistants (NDAPA) awards the distinction of North Dakota Physician Assistant of the Year. NDAPA would like to provide you the opportunity to nominate the PA of your choice. If you know a PA who you would recommend as a candidate, please complete the form below and send a letter detailing the reasons for your nomination to

*Terri Lang, Executive Secretary; NDAPA;  
1412 Cottonwood Avenue;  
Minot, ND 58701  
Phone: 701.720-5010; Fax: 701.839-0967*

Deadline for nominations is **April 16, 2012**. All nominations will be reviewed and selected by the NDAPA Board. The award will be presented at the NDAPA Spring Conference in Fargo on Friday, May 4, 2012. Nominees do not have to be NDAPA members. The PA of the Year nominee may be a PA who works and/or resides in North Dakota and who provides excellent care and service not only to their patients but also to the community and the profession. Other areas of attributes/qualities that you may want to consider for ND Physician Assistant of the Year may include: *Educator*—This is not limited to the academic setting. It is equally applicable to the PA educating the public and their patients on health related issues or the PA profession. *Humanitarian*— This may include the PA whom you feel is giving of himself or herself in the service of others, not only to their patients but also to their community, third world, and/or their profession

**--Nomination Form--**

**2012 North Dakota Physician Assistant of the Year Award  
Sponsored by:  
North Dakota Academy of Physician Assistants**

I nominate the following individual for PA of the Year:

Nominee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator Name : \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please include a letter of recommendation, indicating your reasons for nomination.**

The deadline for nominations is **April 16, 2012**.



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**The mission of NDAPA is to promote quality, cost-effective, accessible health care to enhance the health and well-being of the people of North Dakota and to promote the professional and personal development of Physician Assistants.**